



## By the waters of Babylon...

A common liturgy during a time of physical separation

### June 21, 2020 – Pentecost 2

#### Call to Worship –

All things are known by God,  
all creatures are precious .

There is nothing covered up that will not be revealed,  
nothing hidden that will not be made known.  
Please turn to me, and have mercy, O God.  
give your own strength to your servants.

For you are great and do remarkable things,  
you and you alone are truly God.  
Make our souls joyful, O God,  
for to you our souls aspire.



Sparrows are cheap, but not even one of them falls to the ground  
outside of your heavenly Father's circle of love.  
The very hairs on your head are all numbered,  
and you are more valuable than countless sparrows.

#### Confession

As we worship you, O Lord, open our eyes to see more clearly our sin and our need. Forgive and thoroughly cleanse us, we pray. Then draw us close to you, and to our loved ones already with you. We give back to you those whom you gave to us.

Your Son our Savior has taught us that life and your love are eternal, and that you are preparing a place, a mansion, for us. Prepare us also, that where you are, we may always be.

*from William Penn, English Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania*

#### Assurance of Pardon

Know this: Christ came so that you might know forgiveness. You are forgiven, and freed.

#### Prayer for Illumination

Open our ears, our eyes, our minds and our hearts, O God as we meditate on your living Word.

**Scripture: Matthew 10:24 - 33**

"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!"

"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows."

"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven."

**Reflection**

Jesus says to his disciples: "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master."

What words and phrases describe a disciple for you? What does a disciple do? What is the purpose of being a disciple?

What words and phrases describe a teacher for you? What does a teacher do? What is the purpose?

Consider the relationship between the two. What is the usual relationship? What do they have in common, and what is different? How might the relationship between a teacher and disciple differ if they are like each other rather than the teacher above the disciple?

In your most important relationships, are you above or below or just like another? What does this say about you and what you need to do next?

**Exploring Deeper – from "The Courage to Teach" by Parker Palmer**

"If we embrace diversity, we find ourselves on the doorstep of our next fear: fear of the conflict that will ensue when divergent truths meet. Because academic culture knows only one form of conflict, the win-lose form called competition, we fear the live encounter as a contest from which one party emerges victorious while the other leaves defeated and ashamed. To evade public engagement over our dangerous differences, we privatize them, only to find them growing larger and more divisive."

If we peel back our fear of conflict, we find a third layer of fear, the fear of losing identity. Many of us are so deeply identified with our ideas that when we have a competitive encounter, we risk losing more than the debate: we risk losing our sense of self...

...If we embrace the promise of diversity, of creative conflict and of "losing" in order to "win," we still face one final fear – the fear that a live encounter with otherness will challenge or even compel us to change our lives. This is not paranoia: the world really is out to get us! Otherness, taken seriously, always invites transformation, calling us not only to new facts and theories and values but also to new ways of living our lives – and that is the most daunting threat of all."

**Offering**

Who might you see as your equal this week? What might that look like?

## **Prayers of the People**

This week, as you pray for those whom you know, pray too for those on the frontlines of this current crisis. Pray for communities around the world as we seek to find solutions to the virus, as well as the economic fallout.

## **Benediction**

God desires mercy.

Go, be merciful.

Bear the Light of Christ in the world  
knowing that the Christ goes with you. Always.

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Source material for this liturgy comes from *The Bible Workbench*, Vol 6, Issue 5., and Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach*, 1998

This resource has been developed for the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse for use by members and friends of its congregations.